

DOLIR REVIEW

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St. Louis Phone Center Employees Finally Back “Home” After Office Move

Since last fall, employees of the Division of Employment Security’s St. Louis Regional Claims Center had been working in a world of surplus desks and files in boxes on the floor. But they made the best of it, and now their sacrifice has paid off.

The 86 plus workers at the St. Louis Regional Claims Center are back in their own office area after an extensive renovation of the heating and air condition system in their building at 505 Washington downtown.

Workers in the 43-year-old building had experienced considerable problems with temperature control in the building. Some areas had no ductwork to provide warm or cool air. The system used was state of the art in 1959 – but well past its typical life expectancy and showing it.

Staff in the Department’s Facilities and Maintenance section had been working on the renovation since 1999. During the major work in the claims center’s office area, employees had to move downstairs. For months this meant working on surplus desks in the middle of a large open area, with power and phone cords strung along the

floor and files kept in boxes near one’s desk. Close quarters and a lack of privacy did not provide the best of working conditions, but call center employees maintained their workload. They even hired and trained four new employees while working in this makeshift environment.

In February the claims center staff were finally able to

move back into their own floor. As when they moved to their temporary quarters, they continued working through the move, this time even working over a holiday.

According to call center manager David Wright, it was

teamwork that made the whole thing go smoothly. “Our staff did a great job of dealing with the situation,” he said. “But the real masters of the move were the people from Supply, Information Systems and Facilities and Maintenance. I can’t say enough about them – they were a very big help.”

And Wright added, “Although we were not really a team, just a bunch of different people doing our jobs, we worked together to get it done and it *felt* like we were a team. It worked out great.”



Inside

Employee Profile – Becky Buhr	2	Dunn’s Safety Tips	5
Fraud Unit Employees Donate Time to Charity	2	Department of Revenue and DOLIR Team Up	6
Director’s Message	3	First Lady Visits Department	6
Workers’ Comp Employee Makes TV Appearance	3	Lifestyles	7
DOLIR Black History Month Program a Success	4	January 2002 Employee of the Month	7
Neet’s News	5	Reflections	7



BECKY BUHR

Title:

Claims Technician II

Division:

Employment Security

Section:

*Jefferson City Regional
Claims Center*

Location:

Jefferson City, MO

Employee Profile

Q What do you consider the most important thing your program/division does for Missouri citizens?

A The most important thing we do is provide financial assistance to the unemployed in a prompt and efficient manner.

Q How does what you personally do in your job help or affect Missouri citizens?

A It is very important to complete investigations in a fair and prompt manner and treat the unemployed workers and employers with respect and dignity while answering their questions and assisting them.

Q How do you think what you do could be improved or changed to better serve Missourians?

A I think we are making great strides in improving the way we serve the unemployed workforce and changing to meet the times by utilizing phones and the Internet to make our services available.

Q What part of what you do gives you the most satisfaction/pride/feeling of accomplishment?

A I get a sense of satisfaction from knowing that I have helped to give some peace of mind to a worker and their family in a time of stress and uncertainty by providing financial assistance.

Fraud Unit Employees Donate Time to Charity Organization that Helps Sick Children

Dennis Moore, Richard Bertels and Bob Bruchsaler spend their workdays helping to discover and prevent workers' compensation insurance fraud and noncompliance. Their efforts help ensure that workers' comp insurance providers pay the benefits injured workers are entitled to in a timely manner. They also investigate to determine if employees are collecting benefits they shouldn't. These things help injured workers get better faster and avoid financial hardship. And it helps keep workers' compensation insurance premiums down for employers by cutting down on the amount of fraudulent claims they pay out. Most would agree, this is work truly done for the greater good.

But they don't just do that at work. Because Dennis, Richard and Bob are members of the Central Missouri Chapter of Safari Club International, a nonprofit organization that promotes safe and ethical hunting opportunities for everyone, especially young people who might not otherwise get those opportunities. Over 200 chapters operate worldwide.

Safari Wish, a program of the Safari Club, helps kids with illnesses of a terminal nature live their dreams of spending time hunting or fishing and enjoying the outdoors while they are still able. The Central Missouri Chapter, which was founded only a little over two years ago, has organized hunting

trips for three kids and a fishing trip for another. And they have others on a waiting list.

Kids like David, a leukemia patient whose dream was to hunt whitetail deer. And Eddie, who although confined to a wheelchair, dreamed of going fishing. And Derek who at 8 years old had been diagnosed with juvenile diabetes. The Central Missouri Chapter of the Safari Club paid for him to attend a special camp that would teach him to better manage his diabetes and helped him meet other kids with the same disease.

"Even though we are a relatively new chapter, we think that we have made an immediate and dramatic impact on our community by bringing some joy to these kids, and by promoting safe and ethical hunting opportunities for everyone," said Dennis Moore, chief administrator of the Fraud Detection and Investigation Unit. "To see the smile on a child's face when they have taken their animal is something truly to be remembered."

In addition to paying for the kids' trips, they have the hunting and fishing trips videotaped and have a shoulder mount prepared or the fish mounted. Both the videotape and the mount are presented to the child and his or her parents shortly after the trip.

(Continued on Page 3)

Workers' Comp Employee Makes TV Appearance

Russell Greenhagen, senior mediator with the Division of Workers' Compensation, appeared on the February 15 edition of the locally produced and aired "Pepper and Friends" television show as part of the "You and the Law" monthly segment. He was interviewed by the show's host, Paul Pepper.

Greenhagen was invited to appear on the program because of his work as state co-chair of the Missouri Bar Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee.

His interview, although brief, proved valuable in providing information on the Division of Workers' Compensation to viewers. "I thought the focus would be on alternative dispute resolution and the role of the Missouri Bar throughout the state," Greenhagen said. "Although I had been asked to prepare questions, Paul did not use any of the prepared questions. Instead, he concentrated on my work at the Division of Workers' Compensation."

Greenhagen was glad to describe the work of the mediators and information specialists in the Dispute Management Unit. During the interview, Pepper read the employee and employer information line numbers as they flashed across the TV screen. He also gave out the DOLIR website. "We got several calls almost immediately. So, I know the interview was watched," said Greenhagen.

"The hardest question Paul Pepper asked was, 'What is the number one problem we encounter between employers and employees?' Greenhagen continued, "My careful answer was,

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Be Prepared for Severe Weather



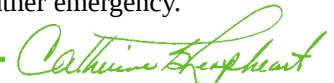
Although we have been fortunate enough to enjoy a relatively mild winter, we are headed quickly into spring and more opportunities for severe storms.

This month the state held its annual Severe Weather Exercise to give us all the opportunity to practice evacuation to places of safety should severe weather occur while we are at work.

Maps showing evacuation routes should be posted in all office sections. Know the difference between the alarm that sounds for a tornado warning and the alarm that sounds for a fire or building evacuation. Know the routes you are to follow should an evacuation be necessary. Know the safe area you are to go to in the event of a tornado. Know where you are supposed to go outside if required to evacuate the building.

If you have any questions, ask your section's group monitor. Knowing and following procedures will help evacuation and safety coordinators make sure everyone is accounted for and help prevent us from getting in the way of safety and emergency personnel that might be on the scene.

Although I hope we never need to use this knowledge, we must all be prepared to act quickly and calmly in a severe weather emergency.



'communication.' I talked about the role of facilitation and mediation in addressing that problem. Perhaps what I said in response to Paul's follow up question generated the most responses. He asked how long it would take to arrange for a mediation conference. I answered that it could be done in three to four weeks. We had a number of callers asking if a mediation conference was appropriate in their case."

All business aside, Greenhagen had

a good time on the show. "I enjoyed seeing how a daily talk show was produced," he said. "There is a carefully organized chaos to preparing a diverse group of people for their part in the show. On the day I appeared on the show, there were also a couple singing Christian music, an expert on lawn fertilizer, the chairman of the Missouri Symphony Society board, and two people from the new University Hospital Emergency Department."

Fraud Unit Employees Donate Time to Charity *(continued from page 2)*

The group also sponsors two hunter safety classes each year in conjunction with the Missouri Department of Conservation, and participates in the Sportsman Against Hunger campaign. In the two-plus years the chapter has been in existence, they have paid to have over 9,000 pounds of wild game processed and the meat distributed to local charities for those who need it.

Recently they have also purchased a covered trailer called "Sensory Safari." This trailer meets the requirements of the

Americans with Disabilities Act and provides a well lit and climate controlled environment where anyone can go to enjoy and learn about various wildlife mounts, which are displayed with descriptive information. Soon, this information will also be available in Braille. Club members take the trailer to different community functions for the public to enjoy. "Our purpose is to educate the public on hunting and how it plays into the conservation effort," said Moore.

DOLIR Black History Month Program a Success



The Department's Cultural Diversity Program sponsored a presentation in February for Black History Month that featured performances by the Lincoln University choir, band and dance troupe. The program was organized by Tracy Ezell of the Department's Human Relations section.

The students entertained a standing-room-only crowd in the cafeteria of the Dunklin Street facility.



Quote of the Month

I long to accomplish a great and noble task,
but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks
as if they were great and noble.

– Helen Keller

Caring Communities Partnership Invents Game to Encourage Kids Not to Use Tobacco Products

Members of the Caring Communities Partnership of the Ozarks in Springfield, MO know that abuse and addictions can begin as harmless fun. Has anyone ever dared you to do something? Whether it was your first puff of cigarette or your first sip of a beer, the dare is usually made to get you to do something that you've never done. That's how abuse, leading to addictions, can begin ...as harmless fun.

To help encourage youth not to use tobacco products, the Partnership invented a unique game, called OCCABOT (tobacco spelled backwards). The game is designed to give children a fun way to learn how cool tobacco is not!

The trip down Tobacco Road often begins at an early age. Each day in the U.S., an estimated 3,000 people begin to use tobacco and 90 percent are under the age of 18. Once the addiction to nicotine sets in, the experiment with tobacco becomes a lifestyle "choice." And the consequences can be deadly.

Teens who smoke are three times more likely than nonsmokers to abuse alcohol, eight times more likely to use marijuana, and 22 times more likely to use cocaine. The statistics on smoking-related deaths also are sobering. More people die from smoking-related illnesses than from alcoholism, AIDs, illegal drugs, car crashes, murder and suicide combined. In Missouri, smoking related illnesses kill 9,900 citizens annually. Thousands more suffer from smoking-related fires, second-hand smoke and use of smokeless tobacco.

The OCCABOT game ties learning and playing together for educational fun. It teaches children the consequences of using tobacco with a board game, ping-pong balls and a jump rope. OCCABOT encourages children to stay away from tobacco and all its negative effects while having a good time.

Jeanne Henry of the Missouri Department of Mental Health contributed to this article.

Neet McCowen is Caring Communities Coordinator for the Department.
To reach her, please call (573) 751-3817.



The OCCABOT game invented by the Caring Communities Partnership of the Ozarks.

Dunn's Safety Tips - Develop Your Family Disaster Plan

A flood, fire or a hazardous materials accident can occur in the blink-of-an-eye. You and your family might be forced to evacuate your neighborhood or you might be confined inside your home. What can you do to protect your family? You should develop a family disaster plan.

Families with a disaster plan cope better with disaster because they are prepared. Remember, knowing what to do is your best protection in any dangerous situation. The National Weather Service, your state and local emergency management agencies and your local American Red Cross chapter urge everyone to develop a family disaster plan.

Follow these steps to create and implement a family disaster plan.

1. Learn about hazards in your area and how you should respond by contacting your county or city emergency management agency. Learn your community's warning signals. Buy a NOAA Tone Alert Weather Radio. Ask about your workplace's and your children's school's disaster plans.
2. Based on the hazards, the family can design an action plan. Depending on the type of disaster, the family can share responsibilities. For example, in an evacuation, children might gather the pets while parents gather food or supplies.

3. In the case of a fire, pick two places to meet – outside your home. In the case of a daytime disaster when your family might not be home, pick a meeting place outside your neighborhood in case you cannot return home. Everyone, including small children should know their address and phone number.
4. Ask an out-of-state friend to be your "family contact" for everyone to call if the family gets separated. After a disaster, it is often easier to call long distance.
5. Have a plan for your pets. Pets are not allowed in American Red Cross shelters.

You have a plan. Now what? Post emergency telephone numbers by phones (fire, police, ambulance, etc.). Teach your children how and when to call 911. Learn basic safety measures, such as CPR and first aid. Show each family member how and when to turn off water, gas and electricity at the main switches. Teach each family member how to use a fire extinguisher. Stock emergency supplies and assemble a disaster supplies kit. Determine the best escape routes from different rooms and find the safe spots in your home for different types of disasters.

*Information courtesy of the
State of Missouri Emergency Management Agency.*

*Steve Dunn is the Department's Safety Coordinator.
He is also Director of the Mine and Cave Safety and Health Consultation Program for the Division of Labor Standards.*

Departments of Revenue and Labor and Industrial Relations Team Up to Simplify Business Tax Registration for New Businesses in Missouri

In order to simplify the tax registration process for new businesses in Missouri and provide better customer service, the Departments of Revenue and Labor and Industrial Relations, Division of Employment Security, have teamed up to create an online business registration.

Since March 4, 2002, new businesses may register by using the online registration for withholding tax, unemployment tax, sales tax, corporate/franchise tax, consumer's use tax and vendor's use tax. The online registration can be found at <http://dor.state.mo.us/tax> or <http://dolir.state.mo.us/es>. The information submitted on the application, regardless of which web

site is used, is shared by the Department of Revenue and Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Division of Employment Security.

The departments are excited to offer an "e-government" alternative to new Missouri businesses to register for taxes. Registering on the Internet will save a new business time and money because it will not have to deal with various departments to fill out applications or mail multiple applications that contain duplicate information. The online registration also allows the departments to process the applications more quickly.

"We are excited to partner with the Department of Labor and Industrial

Relations, Division of Employment Security to offer new businesses an online registration option," said Carol Russell Fischer, director of the Missouri Department of Revenue. "Online registration will help us provide even better customer service."

Catherine Leapheart, director of the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations said, "DOLIR employees are always happy when an outcome results in better and quicker service for employers. This is just one more example of an effort by state employees to streamline processes, enabling them to do a more efficient job and ensure that Missouri employers receive the best service possible."

First Lady Visits Department

Missouri's First Lady, Lori Hauser Holden views being an "Ambassador for the State" as a high priority and advocates for a wide range of issues. Recently she visited the Employment Security building in Jefferson City to meet employees and learn about how they help Missouri citizens. She repeatedly expressed thanks on behalf of herself and her husband, Governor Bob Holden, for the good work DOLIR employees do every day.



Ms. Holden learns about Information Systems from Stuart Huddleston (left) and Jearl Reagan.



From left, First Lady Lori Hauser Holden with Becky Wills and Sylvia Frank from Financial Management.

LIFESTYLES

Retirees from February 2001

Administration

Jo Ann Kinsey, Technician III, Organization and Staff Development

Division of Employment Security

Vanna Schneider, Claims Supervisor II, St. Louis Regional Claims Center

Carol Woehrer, Contributions Technician II, Employer Contributions

UI Appeals

James McGhee, Appeals Referee III

Prudence Stearns, Clerk Typist III

New Employees from February 2001

Division of Workers' Compensation

Renee Slusher, Legal Counsel

Division of Employment Security

Tracey Jackson, Unemployment Insurance Auditor I, Contributions Field

Kevin O'Bryan, Unemployment Insurance Auditor I, Contributions Field

Jean Strickland, Contributions Technician I, Employer Contributions

Promotions from February 2001

Division of Labor Standards

Leah Ann Hilgert, Wage and Hour Investigator I

William Turner, Wage and Hour Investigator II

Division of Workers' Compensation

Doris Brondel, Clerk IV

Vivian Hutchinson, Senior Office Support Assistant

Division of Employment Security

James Cunningham, Unemployment Insurance Auditor II, Contributions Field

Ron Habernal, Unemployment Insurance Auditor II, Contributions Field

Brenda Kreiser, Office Support Assistant (Clerical) Benefits

Robert McKiernan, Claims Supervisor III, Springfield Regional Claims Center

Dennis Rizzelo, Unemployment Insurance Auditor II, Contributions Field

Carolyn Thompson, Office Support Assistant (Clerical) Employer Contributions

Paul Green is January Employee of the Month



Paul Green, a Maintenance Worker II in Administration's Facilities and Maintenance Section in Kansas City, is the Department's January 2002 Employee of the Month.

Green's dedication to his work saved the Department tens of thousands of dollars over the past Christmas holiday. On Christmas morning he went to the Kansas City downtown facility to inspect it and discovered the building without heat and the boiler inoperative. Green's efforts led to the discovery of a problem in the natural gas lines and kept the mechanical equipment from freezing, preventing serious and expensive problems.

Green's holiday efforts are an example of why his co-workers consider him "a very conscientious worker who will stay on any project, even at the sacrifice of personal life."

Reflections



Vanna Schneider retired February 28, 2002 after more than 28 years of service to the Department. Schneider worked as a claims supervisor in the St. Louis Regional Claims Center of the Division of Employment Security.

According to Schneider, she is hard pressed to single out a most memorable experience working for Employment Security.

"I've had so many experiences with Employment Security. Some have been good, some bad (believe it or not) and some have been simply unbelievable. But many are unforgettable."

"Through the years I've enjoyed working in a fairly wide variety of job duties, and in several different sections of the agency. I've been assigned to work in four local offices, a central office section and now, finally, in a telephone claims center.

Some particularly memorable events were the Cost Model study in the late 70's, a week-long training trip to Dallas, TX in the early 80's and now, well, the St. Louis phone center. Wow, what can you say about the St. Louis Phone Center? There just aren't words to express.... Oh well, never mind. But, I'd have to say the single main highlight would simply be all the wonderful people that work for this agency. That is the hardest part about leaving, just having to say goodbye to the many friends I've made throughout the years. I'll truly miss you all."

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Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Office of Public Affairs
PO Box 1958
Jefferson City, MO 65102-1958

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